

**DEPARTMENT OF STATE REVENUE**  
**LETTER OF FINDINGS NUMBER: 07-0085P**  
**Sales Tax-Penalty**  
**For the Period August 2006**

NOTICE: Under IC 4-22-7-7, this document is required to be published in the Indiana Register and is effective on its date of publication. It shall remain in effect until the date it is superseded or deleted by the publication of a new document in the Indiana Register. The publication of this document will provide the general public with information about the Department's official position concerning a specific issue.

**ISSUE**

**I. Tax Administration—Penalty**

**Authority:** IC § 6-8.1-10-2.1; 45 IAC 15-11-2.

Taxpayer protests the imposition of the ten percent negligence penalty.

**STATEMENT OF FACTS**

Taxpayer was assessed a penalty for late payment of sales tax. The Department sent a letter to Taxpayer stating that Taxpayer could request a hearing by replying to the letter within twenty (20) days of the letter. Taxpayer did not reply to the Department's letter. Due to Taxpayer's failure to reply, this Letter of Findings is written based on the information in Taxpayer's protest file and other Department records relating to Taxpayer.

**I. Tax Administration—Penalty**

**DISCUSSION**

Taxpayer protests the imposition of the ten percent negligence penalty on Taxpayer's late payment.

Penalty waiver is permitted if the taxpayer shows that the failure to pay the full amount of the tax was due to reasonable cause and not due to willful neglect. IC § 6-8.1-10-2.1. The Indiana Administrative Code, 45 IAC 15-11-2 further provides:

(b) "Negligence" on behalf of a taxpayer is defined as the failure to use such reasonable care, caution, or diligence as would be expected of an ordinary reasonable taxpayer. Negligence would result from a taxpayer's carelessness, thoughtlessness, disregard or inattention to duties placed upon the taxpayer by the Indiana Code or department regulations. Ignorance of the listed tax laws, rules and/or regulations is treated as negligence. Further, failure to read and follow instructions provided by the department is treated as negligence. Negligence shall

be determined on a case by case basis according to the facts and circumstances of each taxpayer.

(c) The department shall waive the negligence penalty imposed under IC 6-8.1-10-1 if the taxpayer affirmatively establishes that the failure to file a return, pay the full amount of tax due, timely remit tax held in trust, or pay a deficiency was due to reasonable cause and not due to negligence. In order to establish reasonable cause, the taxpayer must demonstrate that it exercised ordinary business care and prudence in carrying out or failing to carry out a duty giving rise to the penalty imposed under this section. Factors which may be considered in determining reasonable cause include, but are not limited to:

- (1) the nature of the tax involved;
- (2) judicial precedents set by Indiana courts;
- (3) judicial precedents established in jurisdictions outside Indiana;
- (4) published department instructions, information bulletins, letters of findings, rulings, letters of advice, etc.;
- (5) previous audits or letters of findings concerning the issue and taxpayer involved in the penalty assessment.

Reasonable cause is a fact sensitive question and thus will be dealt with according to the particular facts and circumstances of each case.

Taxpayer argues that its letter was sent via registered mail and postmarked September 20, 2006, which was the payment due date. Taxpayer provided a photocopy of its envelope in which it remitted sales tax with an electronic stamp dated September 20, 2006. However, the post office postmarked the envelope September 21, 2006, which was one day late. Under IC § 6-8.1-6-3(b), the postmark date—September 21, 2006—is considered to be date on which Taxpayer made its payment. Therefore, the payment was remitted after the due date, which subjected Taxpayer to penalty. Other than the issue regarding the due date, Taxpayer has not provided sufficient grounds in its protest to justify the Department's waiver of penalty.

### **FINDING**

Taxpayer's protest is denied.